



# US 12 UPDATE

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<b>Tragedy (cont.)</b>	2
<b>Coalition (cont.)</b>	2
<b>Phase Map</b>	2
<b>Project Updates</b>	3
<b>Contact Info</b>	3
<b>An IPT is Formed</b>	4

## SPECIAL MENTION

Construction on US 12 should not significantly impact motorists participating in Lewis and Clark Bicentennial events and celebrations. For current construction updates, please visit us on the web at <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/regions/southcentral/construction/update.htm> or call the Washington State Travel Information System at 5-1-1.

## TRAGEDY INTO TRIUMPH

If you ask Yolanda Trout how she feels about the four-laning of US 12, she'll smile and tell you, "I'm excited." Trout has a very powerful connection with US highway 12. In 1993, Yolanda's brother, John Cortinas, dropped his family off in Touchet and was heading back to his home in Puyallup, WA. He was preparing to leave on a church-building mission in California, but he never made it.

John Cortinas was killed by a young man who had spent the day drinking at the boat races in the Tri-Cities. As the young man rushed east on US 12 to pick up his girlfriend, witnesses said he was driving erratically, passing vehicles at about 80 to 90 mph. When he tried to pass a van, he skidded, over-corrected and crashed head-on into Cortinas.

John died immediately on the scene while the young man, whose vehicle was



**Yolanda Trout holds up the picture board that brought safety on US 12 into the legislative spotlight.**

split completely in half, remained buckled in his seat and amazingly uninjured.

Yolanda and John were very close. Instead of crumbling under with grief, Yolanda and her family decided to champion the cause of making US 12 a safer highway for everyone. Yolanda spent six

*(Continued on page 2)*

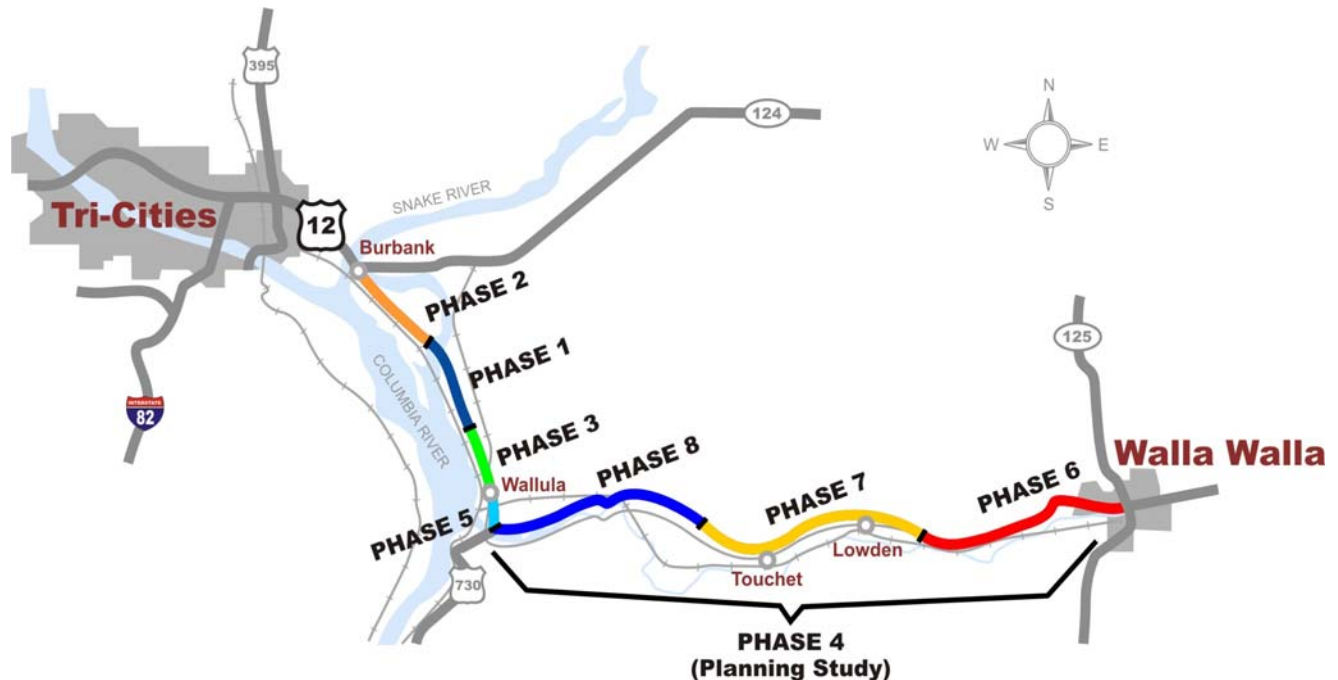
## COALITION'S CORNER

The long sought after goal of four-laning U.S. Highway 12 from Burbank to Walla Walla is becoming a reality thanks to a partnership between the U.S. Highway 12 Coalition, WSDOT and our elected officials at the state and federal level.

While the U.S. Highway 12 Coalition continues to focus its efforts to obtain funding for Phases VI, VII and VIII, the South Central Region office of WSDOT continues to do the heavy lifting. A host of dedicated staff are involved in Phase I construction and planning to ensure

*(Continued on page 2)*






---

## TRAGEDY INTO TRIUMPH (CONT.)

*"I'm so proud that all my hard work paid off.... I can't wait to see it completed."*

days a week for the next two years doing everything in her power to make legislators aware of the need for safety improvements on US 12. Even though she was told by a few local elected officials that this project would never happen, she continued to crusade for the funds to widen this dangerous stretch of road.

Along the way, Yolanda gained many supporters. James Kuntz, Executive Di-

rector of the Port of Walla Walla formed the U.S. Highway 12 Coalition to further Yolanda's efforts and secure funding for the entire Burbank to Walla Walla corridor.

"I'm so proud that all my hard work paid off," said Trout. "The community support just came together and I can't wait to see it completed."

---

## COALITION'S CORNER (CONT.)

Phase II, III, IV and V are completed on time and within budget.

The U.S. Highway 12 Coalition is particularly pleased with WSDOT's public outreach initiative to keep citizens in Southeastern Washington informed on each phase of the project. This newsletter is part of WSDOT's communication plan. The Coalition will be utilizing this newsletter to keep you informed of our

efforts to obtain the necessary financial resources. To learn more about the U.S. Highway 12 Coalition you may also visit our website at:

<http://www.ushighway12.com>.

**- James M. Kuntz**  
Port of Walla Walla Executive Director  
and Coalition Member

# PROJECT UPDATES

**PHASE 1—US 12 McNary Pool to Attalia** *This project will add an additional lane in each direction, replace a bridge, and construct environmental mitigation features.* Construction activities resumed March 1, 2004, following a winter shutdown. Crews have placed concrete bridge deck and bridge approach slabs. Planting operations started on the north and south Casey Pond planting benches and Two Rivers site. Asphalt paving of the new eastbound lanes is complete. Traffic has moved to the new lanes, allowing paving of existing lanes and further bridge construction work.

**PHASE 2—SR124 to McNary Pool** *This project will add one additional lane in each direction for a total of four lanes.* The design phase is in progress. Regional Real Estate Services is acquiring access rights and properties. WSDOT is evaluating several interchange concepts for a future US 12/ SR 124 interchange. A recent Cost/Risk Assessment indicated a 90 percent chance of the project being within budget and over an 80 percent chance of being opened to traffic on time.

**IT'S YOUR NICKEL.  
WATCH IT WORK.**

**PHASE 3—Attalia Vicinity** *This project will add one additional lane in each direction for a total of four lanes, and construct a new bridge crossing over the railway.* Design work has started on the project. The project office continues ongoing discussions with Boise Cascade on their access issues. WSDOT is working towards publishing the access hearing Findings and Order in the spring of 2004.

**IT'S YOUR NICKEL.  
WATCH IT WORK.**

**PHASE 4—Walla Walla to Wallula Planning Study** *This project will prepare initial environmental documentation to determine the preferred corridor alignment for US 12 from the Wallula junction to Walla Walla, addressing congestion and safety needs for the highway.* An Interdisciplinary Project Team (IPT) will assist WSDOT in identifying the baseline conditions and environmental impacts for the alternatives. The IPT was formed on Jan. 22, 2004.

**IT'S YOUR NICKEL.  
WATCH IT WORK.**

**PHASE 5—Attalia Vicinity to US 730** *This project will add an additional lane in each direction for a total of four lanes from SR 124 to the Walla Walla River, and determine the preferred corridor alignment for the future four-laning from Wallula to Walla Walla.* Phase design is scheduled to begin in 2006.

**IT'S YOUR NICKEL.  
WATCH IT WORK.**

**PHASE 6—McDonald Road to Walla Walla** *This project will reconstruct US 12 from McDonald Road to Walla Walla as a four-lane divided highway with improved capacity and enhanced safety.* In 2003 and 2004, the U.S. Highway 12 Coalition successfully lobbied for \$8.2 million in federal funds to continue development of design and contract plans, and for the acquisition of right-of-way for US 12 between McDonald Road and Walla Walla. Recent progress includes surveying, field investigation, data research, and preliminary testing of soil conditions.

**PHASE 7—Nine Mile Hill to McDonald Road** *This project will reconstruct US 12 from Nine Mile Hill to McDonald Road as a four-lane divided highway with improved capacity and enhanced safety.* Currently unfunded, design for this phase has not started.

**PHASE 8—Wallula Junction to Nine Mile Hill** *This project will reconstruct US 12 from the Wallula junction to Nine Mile Hill as a four-lane divided highway with improved capacity and enhanced safety.* Currently unfunded, design for this phase has not started.

## Contact Information

**Phase 1** Project Engineer Moe Davari,  
509-577-1872; DavariM@wsdot.wa.gov

**Phases 2, 3, 5** Project Engineer Troy Suing,  
509-577-1703; SuingT@wsdot.wa.gov

**Phases 4, 6, 7, 8** Project Engineer  
Kerry Grant, 509-577-1760;  
GrantK@wsdot.wa.gov

For general inquiries, please contact newsletter editor Myly Posse at 509-945-0083;  
PosseM@wsdot.wa.gov

Visit us on the Web!  
<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/US12SR124Wallula/>

***MAKING PROGRESS  
FOR SAFETY***



Mailing Address Line 1  
Mailing Address Line 2  
Mailing Address Line 3  
Mailing Address Line 4  
Mailing Address Line 5

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Information: If you would like copies of this document in an alternative format — large print, Braille, cassette tape, or on computer disk, please call Washington State Telecommunications Relay service TTY 1-800-833-6388, Tele-Braille 1-800-833-6385, Voice 1-800-833-6384, and ask to be connected to (360) 705-7097

Title VI Statement to the Public: WSDOT ensures full compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 by prohibiting discrimination against any person on the basis of race, color, national origin or sex in the provision of benefits and services resulting from its federally assisted programs and activities. For questions regarding WSDOT's Title VI Coordinator at (360) 705-7098.

## AN IPT IS FORMED

On January 22, the first US 12 Wallula to Walla Walla Interdisciplinary Project Team (IPT) meeting took place at the Washington State Department of Transportation's maintenance facility in Walla Walla. Creating an IPT eases communication between agencies, increases the knowledge pool and reduces delays and costs associated with project impacts.

### In Attendance

Representatives of the following agencies were present:

- City of College Place
- Confederated Tribes of the Yakama Nation
- David Evans & Associates



**IPT members discuss interagency concerns.**

- TRANSPO
- Washington State Department of Ecology
- Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Washington State Department of Transportation
- US Army Corps of Engineers
- US Fish and Wildlife Service

The next IPT meeting is scheduled for June 3, 2004. Representatives from the city of Walla Walla, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla, Federal Highway Administration, Port of Walla Walla, Walla Walla County and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration will be invited and included on the member list.